I: Jenness--108-109 (1913-16) 1922 Copper Eskimo
116, 372

"A few remarks may be added about the way in which these natives produce fire. The thong drill used by all other Eskimos is known to them, but they never employ it except in an emergency, because of the labour involved and the difficulty of obtaining suitable wood. They use in its stead two lumps of pyrites, which they obtain from the Kugaluk river on south-west Victoria island, from a creek a few miles east of the Coppermine river, and possibly from one or two other sources as well. Parry's description of the process will serve admirably; he says: 'For the purpose of obtaining fire the Esquimaux use two lumps of common iron pyrites, from which sparks are struck into a little leather case, containing moss well dried and rubbed between the hands. If this tinder does not readily catch, a small quantity of the white floss of the seed of the ground willow is laid above the moss. As soon as a spark has caught, it is gently blown till the fire has spread an inch around, when the pointed end of a piece of oiled wick being applied, it soon bursts into a flame, the whole process having occupied perhaps two or three minutes.' (2)

The Copper Eskimos use the seeds of the Eriophorum or cotton-grass more often than those of the ground willow for both tinder and lampwicks. Large quantities of these

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"2. Parry, Vol. III, p. 284."

Eriophorum seeds are collected during the late summer and fall and are stored in small bags of one kind or another, often made from a loon's foot, or a squirrel skin, or the lining round the heart of a caribou or bear. The tedious process of stripping the stalks from the seeds is done by the women in spare moments in their houses. For the lamp-wick the Eriophorum seeds are dipped in the blubber, then drawn up on to the edge of the lamp and pinched into a low ridge all along its rim. Such a wick requires renewing every day, whereas a tinder bag will last for months. In winter, if the lamp expires in one house, a fire-stick dipped in blubber is kindled at a neighbour's lamp and carried over in a bag or other convenient receptacle. Eriophorum seeds are [109] sometimes used in this way, but more usually a torch of matted moss roots dipped in blubber. During a migration, of course, every lamp is extinguished, so the natives have to resort to pyrites on such occasions.

In spring and summer the natives carry a little dry grass to catch the glow of their tinder instead of an oily stick. On old camp-sites fragments of charred wood may always be found which will serve the same purpose. For this reason the Eskimos are careful to cover the embers of their open fires with flat stones which convert some of the unburnt wood to charcoal. In blowing a fire they never purse the lips as we do, but

curl the tongue along the lower palate so as to make a concave channel, thus giving the breath its direction.(1)"

"1. In my preliminary draft of the report I had proposed to follow up this chapter on food with another on clothing. That idea has now been abandoned, for a detailed account of the styles and patterns of the garments worn by the Copper Eskimos, their methods of sewing and of dressing skins, will require a special monograph, and a cursory sketch of the subject seemed unnecessary here. The Copper Eskimos wear only fur clothing, most of their garments being made of caribou fur. The only changes caused by the seasons are the substitution of seal-skin for caribou-skin in certain portions of the foot-gear, and the wearing of water-boots and of older and lighter clothing during the summer months. There are certain differences in the garments worn by the two sexes, but only of a minor character."

2: Stefansson--45-46 (1908-12) 1914 Copper Eskimo
116, 372, 252

"The most important item of fuel among the Copper Eskimo is, of course, the blubber of the seal. Except in special emergencies this is the only article of fuel used in winter in Victoria Island or on the mainland, although the Kanhiryuarmiut on southeast Banks Island use also the fat of the polar bear to some extent. It makes little difference whether driftwood is abundant or scarce in any district, it is never used during the part of the year when people live in snowhouses. It would manifestly be unsuited for the heating of a snowhouse and as a matter of fact, as I know from experience, the seal oil lamp is better suited for the heating of any kind of a substantially built Eskimo house than wood is, even when burned in sheet iron stoves. But in the spring when the snowhouse is discarded for the tent and the people move from the sea ice inland to hunt, the supplies of oil are all left behind at the coast and either wood or heather is used. Among the Noahonirmiut, for instance, we found in the latter part of May, 1910, that families living six or eight miles from the seacoast had taken with them two or three sticks of wood equivalent to as many stout cord wood sticks and these they were eking out for cooking purposes. The man of the family would take an adze and with it make fine chips or shavings which the woman would feed one by one into a tiny flame built under the bottom of the pot. In this way a very small piece of wood could bring a good-sized pot of meat to a [46] boil. When this was done they intended, they told us, to find heather (Cassiope tetragona) underneath the snow and use that for fuel. Later, when the sun had cleared the snow away, it would, of course, be easy to find the heather

which is the favorite fuel of the Copper Eskimo.

The Eskimo of my party were all westerners and used to cooking with driftwood or willows. When during the summer of 1910 we traveled around with parties of the Copper Eskimo, my companions insisted that they were not going to cook with 'grass.' They seemed to look upon the very idea as degrading in some way; and would scout around in search of bushes of willow which they maintained would make a much more satisfactory fire. The result was that our local traveling companions would have their camp pitched and supper cooked before we got our fire lit and proceedings in our camp were usually suspended while we went over and joined them in their supper inviting them later on to come and share ours which was ready an hour or so later. Towards the end of the summer my westerners had finally become convinced that the use of grass was really not necessarily degrading, with the result that we could get our meals as quickly as the natives.

There is a special art about burning heather. You must make a small fire and feed in a handful at a time, keeping the blaze uniform. In most Arctic districts where I have traveled, you cannot walk half a mile without finding a patch of heather big enough to cook several meals by. You build the fire in the proper place and within ten or fifteen feet of it you can gather sufficient fuel for cooking. We found it convenient to carry a small stick of dry wood with which to make shavings to start the fire on damp days, for

when it is wet the heather is not easy to light, but with the fire once going there is no more trouble about it.

The Bear Lake Indians are unfamiliar with the use of heather for fuel, which greatly handicaps them on their annual incursions into the Barren Ground in search of musk-oxen. Like my western Eskimo companions they understand the use of willows, but on the Barren Ground, patches of these are few and far between and quickly hidden beyond chance of discovery by the blizzards of early winter. Consequently the Indians on their musk-ox hunts carry sled-loads of wood which burden them and decrease their speed. When the wood has been exhausted the party retreats towards the forests of Bear Lake again. The local Eskimo are under no such handicap. Even in the depths of winter, they could always find heather to burn, as the Back River people do in fact, as we know from hearsay. The Eskimo with whom we personally associated never leave the sea ice in winter and consequently have no occasion for any fuel except oil."

2: Stefansson--77-78 (1908-1912) 1914 Copper Eskimo
116, 252, 372

"In cooking with heather, the oblong stone pots are set up on small blocks of stone about the height of a common house-building brick laid edge-wise, or perhaps an inch higher. A long slab of stone is then taken and set on edge at the back of the pot and two smaller ones at either end of it, so as to form three sides of a rectangular box for the pot. Fire is then built and small handfuls of heather or a shaving at a time of wood are pushed under the pot to keep a low blaze constantly going.

Our own Eskimo refused for a long time to cook with heather when we were traveling with a party of Coronation Gulf Eskimo, saying their people [78] (Port Clarence, Alaska, and Mackenzie River) never cooked that way. They would therefore hunt far and wide for green dwarf willows, but by the time there were willows enough gathered by our party, further operations would be stopped by hospitable shouts from the other tents to come over and have supper. They had boiled two successive potfuls of meat and sometimes three, while we were getting ready to build a fire. This was too much for the conservatism even of Eskimo and towards the end of the summer our Eskimo could cook a potful of meat as quickly as anybody, though there seemed always an undercurrent of feeling that they were doing something unworthy, and there was much rejoicing in our camp over finding a patch of large willows to camp by, though I cannot see that it helped us to get supper any quicker.

But as our Eskimo prefer wood, for fuel, so the Coronation Gulf people prefer heather.

2: Stefansson--78
116, 372, 181

(1908-1912) 1914

Copper Eskimo

"When heather is scarce and far from camp and wood near and easy to get, they often waste much time gathering and carrying heather, but so often do white men traveling with Eskimo waste time and energy doing in their own way what could be quickly and better done in the way of their companions. It is a common human trait, though the Eskimo has it developed more strongly than most other people, more strongly than the most 'old-fashioned' European."

2: Stefansson--77-78 (1908-1912) 1914 Copper Eskimo-2
116, 252, 372

When heather is scarce and far from camp and wood near and easy to get, they often waste much time gathering and carrying heather...."

2: Stefansson--102 (1908-12) 1914 Copper Eskimo
116, 372, 412

"The three-piece drill, bowdrill, or firedrill is here what it is elsewhere, practically. The bow is usually one of the long ribs of a musk-ox, and the mouth-piece often the bone from the hock-joint of a caribou, and the stem of the drill of antler, musk-oxen, or bear bone, the point most often of iron but occasionally of copper. For drilling the eyes of needles, the drill point is usually a fragment of a broken needle."

2: Stefansson--113 (1908-1912) 1914 Copper Eskimo
372

"As has been pointed out above, the Haneragmiut receive copper and caribou skins from the north and articles of wood from the south and these act as go-betweens for the Haneragmiut and Akuliakattagmiut. Their only peculiar local resource is that there are some deposits of iron pyrites, a substance that is universally used by the Copper Eskimo in kindling fire, and this they sell to many of the surrounding tribes."

12: Collinson--284 [2] (1851-53) 1889 Copper Eskimo
116, 372, 237

"Wood is seldom if ever used as an article of fuel; seals' blubber being almost all that can be required in snow huts, where, if the temperature rise above freezing point, dissolution of house, bed, table, chairs, and floor ensues. In fact, the frost appears to do for them what fire does for us, render them dry and comfortable, and nothing can so seriously incommode them as a warm rainy day."

17: Merwin--168 (No date) 1915 Copper Eskimo
116, 372

"For fire making there are bags of squirrel or other skin, which contain two pieces of pyrites and a leather case of pussy willow down. Fires are started in the same manner that flint and steel are used elsewhere. Sparks are struck from the pyrites onto the down, which serves as tinder. The fire making outfits often include pouches made of the skin of birds' feet. These pouches contain moss or other material to serve as lamp wicks."

412 Two incidents that came directly under my notice in the summer of 1915
322 were fairly typical. A native with whom I was travelling in southwest Victoria Island discovered on the beach a long, nail-studded plank that had presumably fallen overboard from some vessel. He carried it several miles inland to our camp, and there spent half a day splitting it into poles for fish-spear handles, two of which he sold to a kinsman. A few days later another native found a second plank, which he proposed to convert into a sled-runner, and with this purpose in view trimmed it slightly with his hunting knife. After consulting his companions, however, he decided that a new sled-runner was not needed, so he turned the [237] plank over to his stepfather to fashion into tent-poles. In each case the native split the plank with a crude antler wedge driven home by a boulder.

322 The uses of wood were naturally manifold. From it were made the sled,
• 302 the tent-poles, the frame of the kayak, the snow shovel, the table, food trays, and other articles too numerous to mention. Odd chips of wood sometimes
824 served as fuel during the summer months, although the Eskimo preferred
513 heather or willow twigs. Willow twigs had a special use; sewn together in a long strip they provided a mattress to protect the bedskins from the snow.

STONE

333 Stone (apart from native copper) played an astonishingly small rôle in the economy of the Copper Eskimo. Their winter home was invariably the snow-
[342] hut, although their predecessors in the region had dwelt in huts of snow or wood, whose ruins could still be traced in numerous places along the coast. Loose stone boulders held down the edges of the Copper Eskimo tents; pillars of stone (in many cases flat slabs of dolomite easily piled one on top of another) supported kayaks, sleds, and other goods that were temporarily abandoned during the summer months; and heaped-up boulders protected caches of meat or clothes from the ravages of foxes, wolves, and birds; but any real construc-
324 tion in stone was conspicuously lacking. There were no stone knives or adzes,
412 no arrow heads tipped with stone, no stone sinkers for fishing lines or nets, and no stone scrapers for use on wood or hides, although implements of all these types had been used by the earlier inhabitants and were sometimes gathered as curiosities by the Copper Eskimo themselves. There were stone hammers and whetstones, it is true, but these were merely unshaped pebbles picked up when
[415] the need arose and afterwards discarded. In short, stone provided the material
[354] for two objects only, the lamp and the cooking pot; and the stone cooking pot
[179] was discarded soon after our visit in favour of iron vessels brought in from the outside.

135

Figure 1. Lamp of native copper. IV.D.1441. 1/1.

324 These two vessels, the lamp and the cooking pot, were invariably made from
415 soapstone (talc chlorite schist), originally with copper-bladed adzes, but in our
354 time with adzes of iron. Freshly quarried soapstone readily scratches with the
316
[135]

fingernail, so that the labour of manufacturing even a large vessel was comparatively slight, never requiring more than a few days. We saw no pots made of any other material, but from Prince Albert Sound we obtained two lamps, one fashioned from a red sandstone, the other from an igneous rock, that could hardly have been hollowed out with adzes in the ordinary way, but must have been shaped by some pecking and grinding process. Their owners knew nothing about their manufacture, and there is good reason to believe that they were not made by the Copper Eskimo, but came in from Hudson Bay.[1]

As stated in the introduction, the natives considered their amygdaloidal copper,[2] which took the place of stone, bone, or ivory in so many of their implements, as merely a peculiar stone that they could work into shape, cold, by hammering with boulders and pebbles (Figure 1). Whether they were able to drill copper before they obtained iron is uncertain; if so, they must have used stone- or copper-pointed drills. In our time they still retained one or two of these copper-pointed drills, but used them, so far as we observed, only on bone, antler, and wood.

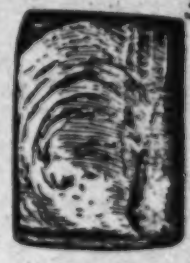

Figure 2. Lump of galena, used for marking skins. IV.D.[illegible], 1/1.

The only important mineral besides copper was iron pyrites, which the Eskimo gathered mainly in the beds of two streams, Kugaluk River in the southwest of Victoria Island and a creek a few miles east of Coppermine River. There were other sources, however, that I failed to record. This mineral served the natives instead of flint and steel for striking fire. They possessed also a few fragments of galena (Figure 2) and litharge, which they used for marking skin and wood; the galena came mostly from Galena Point in Bathurst Inlet, but the source, or sources, of the litharge is not known.

BONE, ANTLER, HORN, IVORY

The caribou and the musk-ox supplied nearly all the bone that the Copper Eskimo required, although for shoeing the runners of their sleds they used rib bones from occasional whales that drifted up on their shores. There was hardly a bone in the two land animals that could not be turned to some purpose. Leg bones were in special demand for skin stretchers, for needle-cases, and for sheathing the wooden ends of harpoon shafts; another type of skin stretcher was fashioned from a caribou or musk-ox shoulder blade. The ribs served for handles of various kinds, for small toggles, pins, and bows for the drilling set. Other toggles were made from the breast or pelvic bones, and the astragalus provided a ready made mouthpiece for the drill.

The caribou alone provided antler, which was just as useful as bone, and interchangeable with that material for most purposes. On the other hand, ivory, which Eskimo elsewhere often substituted for bone and antler, was extremely rare, because neither the narwhal nor the walrus frequents the waters adjacent to the Copper Eskimo territory; consequently, the few ivory objects we saw among the natives almost certainly reached them by trade from the east or the west. Sheep likewise were absent, so that all the horn in use came from the musk-ox. This horn sometimes took the place of bone or antler, but it was especially prized for the manufacture of ladles, scoops, drinking horns, toggles for the sled, and hammers for pounding blubber.

Originally the Copper Eskimo used only four tools, all with copper blades, for shaping bone, antler, and horn, viz., the adze, the whittling knife, the grooving

[1] See p. [illegible].
[2] For the sources of this copper see Reports of the Canadian Arctic Expedition, vol. XII, pt. A, p. [illegible]; vol. XI, pt. A, p. [illegible] et seq.

28: Jenness E-5 (1914-1916) 1946
ND8 Copper Eskimo ND8

CHAPTER III

HOUSEHOLD FURNITURE

FIRE-MAKING

372 The Copper Eskimo were familiar with the method of making fire by means of the thong drill, but rarely practised it because it involved strenuous labour and suitable wood was rare. The handles of some of their whittling knives and other tools had small holes to fit the top of the spindle, for a man pressing down with both hands could exert greater force than was obtainable with the usual drill mouthpiece. Figure 46 shows the hearth of an old fire-making apparatus; the specimen was discovered on the beach at Kater Point, close to Bathurst Inlet.

372 316 The ordinary method of making fire was by striking together two pieces of iron pyrites, for which there were several sources around Coronation Gulf, the two best known being Kugaluk River, which flows down from the Colville Hills in southwest Victoria Island into the sea behind Cape Kendall, and a small river a few miles east of Coppermine River. The pyrites was occasionally covered with sealskin or caribou skin to protect the hand.

372 237 415 824 The spark was caught in willow catkins contained in a small disk-shaped bag of sealskin closed with a circular lid of the same material (Figure 47). A little blowing soon spread the glow over a large surface so that it could ignite a lamp-stick or a bunch of matted moss roots dipped in blubber. To foment a flame, however, most Eskimo kept a little stock of dry grass, which, like the lamp-wick of eriophorum seed, they carried in small bags made from the lining around the heart of some animal (*Figure 49*), from the skin on a loon's foot (Figure 49), or from caribou or marmot fur.

Figure 46. Wooden hearth of fire drill. IV.D.319. 1/3.

LAMPS

354 Many writers have stressed the fundamental importance of the Eskimo blubber lamp, without which the natives could not have survived along the northern coast-line. Although in certain regions they have now adopted substitutes such as stearin candles, coal-oil lamps, wood stoves, and primus stoves, throughout large parts of the Arctic the blubber lamp still holds its own.

178 Porsild[1] states that "In Arctic regions proper, train-oil is the only fuel, and there the lamps are large; where other fuel —heather, wood, peat or coal—is available, either the whole year round or only in the summer, the lamp used for burning blubber oil loses its importance as a heater, and is used

372 113

[1] Porsild, Morten P.: The Material Culture of the Eskimos in West Greenland; Meddelelser om Grønland, vol. LI, p. 202.

354 solely for illuminating purposes. For this, small specimens may suffice. But a
[511] surplus of light and heat is inevitably connected with the Eskimo idea of luxury;
[171] therefore big lamps are also found in such regions. Conversely, small and rudely made lamps for burning blubber oil are found also in the regions of the Far North.

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a

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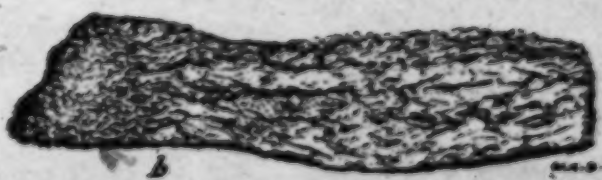

b

Figure 47. Fire-lighting apparatus; a: sealskin tinder-bag containing orlophorum seeds, IV.D.728, 1/1; b: moss-root torch, IV.D.327, 1/2.

354 The reason for this may either be lack of material, or these lamps may be
171 intended for some particular purpose—for use on journeys or for illuminating the entrance or corners inside the house."

Hough again, in his well-known memoir,[1] distinguishes three kinds of Eskimo lamps on the basis of their use, viz. the house lamp, the travelling or summer lamp, and the mortuary lamp, the latter frequently being models.

Figure 68. Bag for dry grass, made from the lining around an animal's heart. IV.D.238. 1/1.

Neither of these statements is quite correct when applied to the Copper Eskimo. They had lamps of every size, from 2 or 3 inches long up to 30 inches; and small vessels 8 or 12 inches long were as common as lamps of 30 inches. From June to September or October, when most of the snow had melted from the land and the families were scattered in search of fish and caribou, the natives generally cached their lamps with the sleds on the seashore or on the margins of lakes, and used for fuel dwarf willow, heather, *Dryas integrifolia*, and other plants, instead of blubber. Consequently, they had no special summer lamp. But because their ordinary lamp seldom functioned during the summer months we cannot say with Porsild that it had lost its importance as a heater. It still remained the indispensable prerequisite of existence during two-thirds of the year for heat as well as for light.

[1] Hough, Walter. Ann. Rept. Smith. Inst., U.S. Nat. Mus., 1898, p. 1003.

Lamps only 2 or 3 inches long were children's toys, often made by themselves while their parents were manufacturing larger vessels. The Copper Eskimo placed on the graves of females these minature lamps, or else genuine vessels of small size, simply because they valued their larger lamps too highly to throw them away, and believed that the dead person could enlarge a miniature to suit its needs. Frequently, perhaps generally, they recovered useful lamps that had been deposited on the graves of relatives a few years earlier. Very rarely did they make a lamp, even a miniature one, for mortuary purposes only; and when they did, it was nearly always a wooden model, because soapstone was procurable only in one or two districts.

Figure 49. Bag for grass or eriophorum seeds, made from loon's foot. IV.D.324. 1/1.

Most of the cooking was done on lamps not less than 24 inches long. Lamps smaller than this, even down to 5 and 6 inches, served for short journeys, but were not intended primarily for that purpose any more than to be deposited on graves. Rather they were used to dry extra clothes, to give additional light for sewing or working, or to enable a little girl to play at housekeeping in a corner of the hut. Two small lamps laid side by side sometimes took the place of one large lamp for cooking. When these smaller specimens were made of soapstone the shapes were the same, and the workmanship as careful, as in the larger ones. Frequently, however, a family was content to use a water-worn pebble with a saucer-shaped depression, or a naturally hollow slab of limestone or dolomite.

If we exclude the makeshift lamps last mentioned there was really only one kind among the Copper Eskimo, the regular house lamp, of which the smaller specimens, when not mere toys, were generally used for light alone, the larger for both light and heat. Nearly all were made of talc chlorite schist, a soapstone that is soft, of even texture, easily worked with stone or copper tools, and not liable to crack and break under the low heat of the burning blubber.[1]

[1] In their spring tents the Eskimo sometimes rested the lamp directly on two snow blocks and kept them lighted for a considerable time without other effect than the gradual melting of the snow.

354 352 two or three stones supported the lamp; and on short winter journeys, when the lamp served only for light, it was simply placed on a block of snow. As already stated, it was seldom employed during the summer months.

354 824 [137] [237] [415] Unlike nearly all Eskimo tribes the Copper Eskimo seldom or never used moss for the lamp-wick, but substituted the seeds of the cottongrass, *Eriophorum angustifolium*, or, more rarely, the catkins of the dwarf willow, either of which gave a more smokeless flame. *Eriophorum angustifolium* matures about the beginning of September, and it was at that season the women gathered the seeds into small bags made of loon skin, marmot skin, or other convenient material. They gathered a large supply, as in midwinter the wick needed daily renewing; and they deferred the separation of the seeds from the stalks until leisure moments in camp.

354 372 237 462 [171] [824] *Lighting and Tending the Lamp.* The Copper Eskimo lighted and tended their lamps in the same way as the Eskimo of Smith Sound[1] except that they did not chew the blubber and spit it into the lamp. The housewife took out of a sealskin-poke two or three strips of blubber a foot or more long by several inches wide, and with a specially designed hammer of musk-ox horn (*See* Figure 63) pounded them on the table to break up the cells.[2] She then laid them in the well of the lamp, when a little oil began at once to accumulate on the bottom, unless the weather was extremely cold. In this oil she soaked her eriophorum seeds, and arranged them along the lip of the lamp in a continuous line so that their lower edges touched the bottom of the well (or at least dipped into the oil that shortly accumulated), and the upper edges projected about a quarter of an inch above the rim. To light the wick she pinched it up into little points 2 or 3 inches apart, which readily caught fire from the torch; and by patting up adjacent parts of the wick with her lamp-trimmer she quickly produced a continuous smokeless flame rising to a height of about three-quarters of an inch. As the heat melted the oil out of the strips of blubber, she removed them to the back shelf of the lamp until they drained; then, later, she threw them to the dogs. Sometimes, if the lamp already contained a certain quantity of oil, she placed fresh strips of pounded blubber on the same shelf instead of in the well, so that the oil would not accumulate too rapidly and drip over the outer edges of the lamp. The Copper Eskimo had no device for melting the blubber on a stick or shelf, such as was common in both the eastern and western Arctic.

354 462 Hough[3] says that lamp-trimming "only reached perfection in the old women of the tribe, who can prepare a lamp so that it will give a good, steady flame for several hours, while usually half an hour is the best that can be expected." This is not true of the Copper Eskimo. There, the women naturally have more experience than the men, and on the average are more skilful, but many a hunter can tend the wick just as successfully as his wife. A lamp is seldom allowed to smoke; one of the inmates, be it the man, his wife, or even one of the children, is sure to notice it and pat down the wick.

354 415 [171] The same writer states in another passage[4] that "the lamp and the pot usually agree as to size, the rule being that the length of the pot shall be equal to the length of the wick edge." Among the Copper Eskimo, as in Smith Sound and, I believe, elsewhere, the sizes of the two vessels bear no direct relation to one another. For obvious reasons the wick edge of the lamp should be no shorter than the bottom of the pot; but it may be, and often is, much longer, for with her lamp-trimmer the housewife can readily adjust the flame to whatever length she desires.

[113] [1] Cf. Stromsby, H. P.: Contributions to the Ethnology and Anthropology of the Polar Eskimos. Meddelelser om Grønland, vol. XXXIV, p. [illegible].
[2] Polar bear fat was sometimes used instead of seal blubber, and probably fat of any kind in emergencies.
[3] Hough: op. cit., p. [illegible].
[4] Hough: op. cit., p. [illegible].

12

The lamp-trimmer mentioned several times above was in most cases merely a pencil of wood varying in length from 6 to 18 inches, generally flattened at one end and smoothed. Any small stick, whether of wood, bone, or antler, sufficed in an emergency; I have even seen a man use his knife. The stone (soapstone or asbestos) pencils, often employed in West Greenland and in Hudson Bay,[1] seem to have been unknown to the Copper Eskimo. Unknown, too, were the drip-stands of Alaska, Greenland, and other places. The Coronation Gulf soapstone is not porous as the Greenland soapstone is said to be[2]; and though oil might frequently drip over the edges, it never seeped through the vessel itself. 354 412 [135]

Every household employed torches for lighting extra lamps, for searching the corners of the hut, and particularly for conveying fire from one snow-hut to another. Occasionally a woman used the lamp-stick or even raw lamp-wick, but she always kept for the purpose four or five bunches of matted moss roots that she had collected and dried in the late summer (Figure 47b). Such a torch, dipped in the melted blubber, would burn several minutes, though if carried outside in windy weather it had to be shielded inside a bag or bucket. It was a common sight after a day's march to see the women carrying torches from one hut to another in order to relight their lamps; the first lamp, of course, was lighted with pyrites. 416 [824]

In summer, when the lamp was discarded, the Eskimo carefully extinguished their open-air fires with flat stones in order to reduce the burning wood to charcoal, which readily took a spark on some future occasion and could be kindled into a flame with the breath. In blowing the fire they did not purse their lips as we do, but curled the tongue along the lower palate into a half-cylinder that directed the breath along a narrow path. When carrying glowing coals from one tent or cooking place to another the women usually wrapped them in bunches of dry heather or *Dryas integrifolia;* where no coals were available they used the heather or dryas alone. 372 [824] [137]

POTS

The Back River Eskimo commonly made their cooking pot from five flat slabs of limestone cemented together.[3] Among the Copper Eskimo we saw none of this type, only pots carved from solid slabs of soapstone. Theoretically these pots should have received two forms, one adapted for cooking over the blubber lamp in winter and the other for use over an open fire during the summer months. The pot for use with the blubber lamp should have been a long, oblong vessel, rather narrow, because the flame of the lamp was a long, narrow line; it should have been comparatively deep to hold large pieces of seal and caribou meat; and it might have had considerable dimensions and weight, as it was always carried on the sled during the winter and spring months. The pot for use over an open fire in summer should have been less narrow, and altogether smaller and lighter, because at that season all the household furniture had to be carried on the back. 415 [171] [324] [252] [493] [482]

In actual fact both types existed among the Copper Eskimo, but the longer, narrower form adapted for use over the blubber lamp was far more generally used, as winter conditions prevailed during 8 months of the year. The pot was nearly always rectangular in outline, though one saw occasional specimens of trapezoid form. The corners were sharp, almost at right angles, the sides slightly convex in outline and sloping inward towards the bottom, making the vessel widest and longest at the top; the convexity in the sides was occasionally marked. In large pots there was a tendency for the depth to vary inversely with the breadth, so that the narrower vessels were likewise the deepest. 113

[1] Forsyth, M.: Op. cit., p. [illegible]. Thalbitzer, W.: The Ammassalik Eskimo; Meddelelser om Grønland, vol. XXXIX, p. [illegible] (Copenhagen, [illegible]).
[2] Birket-Smith, K.: Ethnography of Egedesminde District; Meddelelser om Grønland, vol. LXVI, p. [illegible] (Copenhagen, [illegible]).
[3] Chief Factor James Anderson's Back River Journal of [illegible]; Can. Field-Nat., vol. LV, [illegible], p. [illegible].

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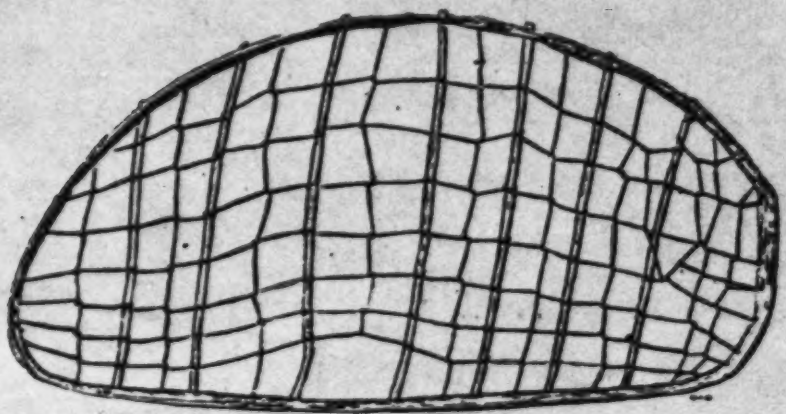

Figure 62. Drying frame. IV.D.647. Approx. 1/14.

BLUBBER POUNDERS

Although a stone or any convenient implement might be used in an emergency to pound the blubber for the lamp, every household possessed at least one, and often two or three implements especially made for this purpose. It was invariably of musk-ox horn, curved evenly almost to a semicircle. The handle was flattened on the sides, and had three or, more usually, four grooves on the under surface to fit the fingers; rarely it ended in a small knob. In size it varied from children's toys 2 or 3 inches long to specimens of 11 inches; the average household size was around 8 inches (Figure 63). Ornamentation was rare, but one specimen in the possession of the Museum (IV. D 1611) has etched into its surface the ring-and-dot design and three parallel lines.

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[531]

These Copper Eskimo blubber pounders of musk-ox horn differ slightly from the Netchilik specimen figured by Boas.[1] The latter have for the first finger a deep notch that seems to form almost a right angle, sharply dividing the hammer end from the handle. All the Copper Eskimo specimens that I have seen bear rounded grooves only, so that their form is much more graceful. Blubber pounders were used in west and northwest Greenland,[2] and probably also both in Mackenzie delta and in Alaska. The typical West

412
372
321
171
[113]

Figure 63. Blubber pounders, of musk-ox horn, the smallest a toy only. IV.D.[illegible], [illegible], [illegible]. Approx. 3/8.

[1] Boas, F.: Eskimo of Baffin Island and Hudson Bay; Arch. Papers, Am. Mus. Nat. Hist., vol. XV, [illegible], p. [illegible].
[2] Thalbitzer, William: Middelstaedt aus Grönland, vol. [illegible], p. [illegible].

321 Greenland implement seems to have been made of antler, the heavy base at right
412 angles to the prong forming the hammer head.[1] For Mackenzie delta and Alaska
our information is less certain, but some bone-headed mallets figured by
372 Murdoch,[2] were probably used for pounding blubber; they are mounted on
171 wooden handles like the ordinary stone-headed mallet from this region. The
Museum possesses a stone mallet (IX.F.223), unmounted, from Barrow that
was said to have been used for pounding blubber.

321 The blubber pounder made of musk-ox horn is evidently a special product
of the central regions, where alone, except for the uninhabited northern archi-
412 pelago and North Greenland, the musk-ox has persisted down to the present
372 day. The convenient shape and weight of the natural horn doubtless suggested
174 its use for this purpose; and the grooving of the handle for the fingers was
[171] already practised with certain other tools, such as the marline-spike for the
back-lashings of the bow.

415
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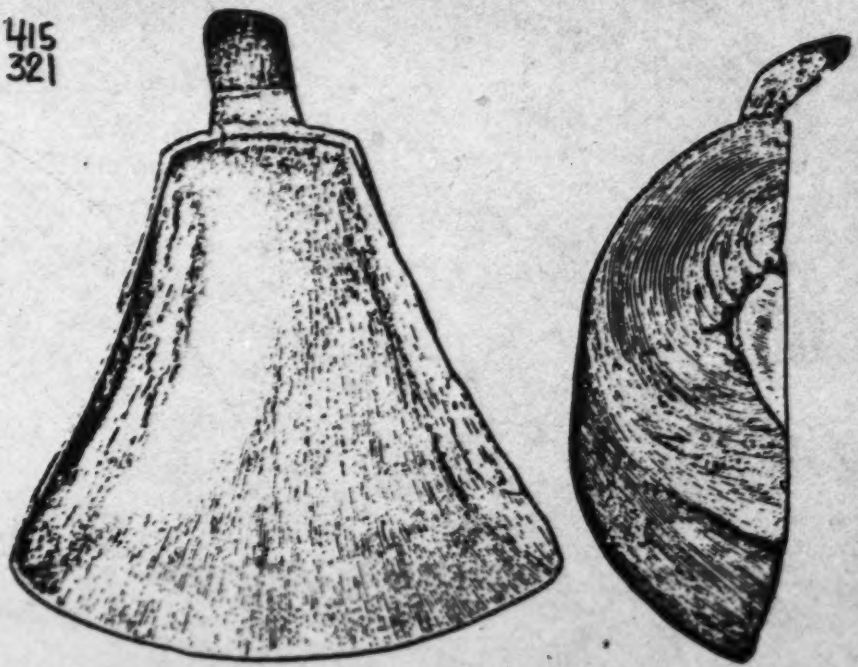

Figure 64. Drinking ladle, of musk-ox horn. IV.D.1488. Approx. 1/2.

LADLES AND DRINKING HORNS

Drinking ladles of musk-ox horn were indispensable to every household, but never carried by hunters in the field. Their usual shape is illustrated in Figure 64. In size they varied from children's toys 4 or 5 cm. long (often made of

[113]

[1] Birket-Smith, Kaj.: Ethnography of the Egedesminde District; Medd. om. Grøn., vol. LXVI, fig. 14.
[2] Murdoch, John: Ninth Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology; Smith. Inst., pp. 87-92.

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kinsman Ikpuck. For the rest, he was an energetic hunter, a good sealer, and a very skilful fisherman, qualities that rank high in an Eskimo community. His marriage yielded him no children, but his wife, whose first husband had died a few years earlier, brought a fourteen-year-old son in her train.

Even the children had many little duties to perform in this our last camp on the sea-ice, while the fathers hunted seals and caribou, and the mothers sorted out the household things they intended to leave on the coast, or filled the pokes of blubber they were storing away for the autumn months. Each family had two pokes that weighed, when full, between three hundred and four hundred pounds, and our most pressing task for the moment was to dispose of them. Most people would have found it very unpleasant to cram a bag with oily seal blubber; but the women, accustomed to the task from childhood, merely put on their oldest clothes, rolled up the coat-sleeves, and buried their arms in the greasy mass without the slightest hesitation.

Not all the oil that exuded from the blubber found its way into the pokes. The women rubbed some of it over their faces to mitigate the effect of sunburn, and recommended the same treatment for my own weather-beaten countenance. Sunburn hardly seemed credible when the temperature of the atmosphere remained constantly below the freezing-point; but the sun now shone throughout the twenty-four hours of

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752
182 the day, and its light was doubled by reflection from the snow. So man, like the animals, changed his colour
142 with the season. The faces of the Eskimos during the dark days of winter had been as fair as an Englishman's; now they were tanned to the deep rich brown of a southern European. One or two appeared to be darker still, but I strongly suspected that they could be appreciably lightened by a liberal application of soap and water.

372 Ikpuck and I conveyed his blubber pokes to a small
417 island three miles off the coast, where we covered them with boulders to protect them from sea-gulls and foxes. The sea-gulls were easily deterred, but only a well-built cache could keep out the foxes, which worm their way into the smallest crevices. Before open water cut off communication with the shore, however, all animals would leave the island, and nothing could disturb our pokes throughout the summer.

225 Continual sealing began to pall on the Eskimos when the safe disposition of their blubber removed the last
132 excuse for lingering on the sea-ice. The long winter had come to an end, and the midnight sun was shining over their heads. They forgot the monotonous hours of confinement within the dimly lighted huts, when the blizzards raged outdoors and the twilight of noon resembled night rather than day. The earth was
136 awakening to life again after its long sleep. Ducks
137 and loons flew overhead, the ptarmigan in the valleys

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usual starting-point for Eskimos travelling to the Great Sound, since the hills immediately north were lower than at any other place either to east or west. Okowyarvik means "the Home of the Dryad," not the wood-nymph of that name, who could never find a home in this desolate land, but the *Dryas integrifolia*, a tiny flowering plant distantly related to our rose. The Eskimos generally paid little attention to the plants around them because they added nothing to their food supply; but the dryad, heather, and willow furnished their fuel during the summer months, and in the hills heather and willow were not procurable.

We lingered a week at "Dryad Harbour," for the season was still early and the snow that covered the land would last another month. While the men were hunting caribou the women overhauled their bags of clothing, putting aside all the heavier garments not needed again till winter. To these they added the furniture of the snow-huts, the long wooden tables, the drying frames, and a few of the stone lamps. Each family made a separate pile of its possessions, and on top of each pile the men deposited their sealing weapons, useless for the life on land. I myself cached nearly all my provisions—pemmican, rice, oatmeal, hard bread, and tea sufficient to last me about a month; only a little tea and cornmeal I retained on my sled, to ease the transition from the "balanced" diet of

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easily on runners of steel. The Chatterbox and his family, who came next in the line, had abandoned their sled and hitched their dogs to a polar-bear skin that carried all their possessions. Last of all came Parted-Hair's sled, in the same condition as Ikpuck's. The Listener and his wife, too old to make unnecessary journeys, remained at the lake to watch over the meat and fish we had spread out on boulders to dry in the sun.

Twelve miles from the Lake of Dancing we sighted caribou and shot a large bull. We camped beside its carcass, and the women, who had failed to bring stone lamps and blubber, trusting to cook over open fires, searched the ridge-tops for fuel. But the season was less advanced on this side of the divide and vegetation scarcer, so that they found no fuel of any kind, not even the wretched dryad. I boiled a little venison for myself on the primus lamp, but the rest dined quite cheerfully on raw meat. Their tents, too, they had left behind, but they propped up two caribou robes for shelter from the breeze and spread out their sleeping-bags under the open sky. I fell asleep to the murmur of the dance-song they were practising for the meeting with the Tormiat from the Great Sound.

Big Lake, which we reached late the next evening, appeared to be circular in outline and about ten miles in diameter. We camped near its southern end, where we found old camp-sites, although the lake itself was silent and deserted.

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593 Ikpuck's longing for a son. So their home life was complete.

[152] Nevertheless the Tormiat woman disturbed Ice-house's peace of mind. She shrank from remaining in the same camp with her rival, and entreated Ikpuck to lead back our party to the Lake of Dancing. Ikpuck consulted me, and we agreed to depart on the morrow.

574 535 The natives from the Great Sound joined us in a dance of farewell, and we started on the homeward march.

• 372 The snow was melting everywhere, and the women, skirting the ridges, filled their bags with dryads to cook our evening meal. We wandered along like bees, sipping at every thimbleful of water that collected [137] in the cracked soil. A few pink saxifrages were open-[136] ing out their blossoms, and Lapland longspurs sang gaily all around. My companions laughed and chattered as, marching steadily, we re-entered the Colville Hills. But when we approached a knoll slightly higher than the others Ikpuck raised his voice and wept 765 shrilly. Yonder, on its crest, lay the bleaching bones of his only brother who had died six years before; and of all his family he alone remained. The whole train wailed aloud in sympathy, the hills echoed their cries, and the frightened longspurs crouched silent in the moss. Slowly our gloomy procession trailed past the fatal site; but when it lay far behind us my companions ceased their wailing and filled the air again with cheerful laughter.

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caribou. After two days' marching we set up the tents on the shore of a small lake and discussed our hunting program. Ikpuck and The Runner agreed to scour the land to the northward, where the hills sloped away toward Big Lake. I myself chose the higher land to the south-east, whence I could gain a wider view of the country and perhaps discover some rock-exposure that would indicate the geological formation. Leaf wanted to go with her husband, and Jennie insisted on sharing their fun. As for Icehouse, she was content to fish near camp with little Knife-Blade.

We went our several ways in the morning, but an hour after we separated a dense fog settled over the land. I turned back immediately, and by good luck gained the camp again. Some of the dogs were prowling among the tents, and Icehouse and Knife-Blade were fishing just below, but of Ikpuck and his party there was no sign. I sent Knife-Blade home to guard the camp and fished in the lake all day with Icehouse. From time to time the fog lifted for a few minutes, but closed in again as densely as before. Toward midnight, when the light faded a little, we returned to the tents, ate some dried fish, and tumbled into our sleeping-bags.

Icehouse became alarmed when the fog continued unchanged next day. She knew that the hunters were in no danger of starvation, for they all carried fishing-lines. Even if they were unable to cook their fish

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they were no worse off than ourselves, for the few dryads growing round our camp were too damp even to smoulder, and the semi-dried fish we ate for breakfast and supper were hard on the outside, but perfectly raw within. It was the exposure she dreaded, especially for her little daughter Jennie. She fretted about the child all through the morning, and several times I heard her cry to the fog, "Go away. No one wants you. You make us cold and uncomfortable;" just as white children call to the rain:

> "Rain, rain, go to Spain,
> Never show your face again."

Her anxiety increased toward evening, and she adopted sterner measures. She tied a cord around her face to distort her features, and with a set fox-trap in one hand and a knife in the other, defied the fog with threats and mocking laughter. Knife-Blade and myself, holding her arms, echoed her mockery. "You're a pesky nuisance," she cried, flinging the trap to the ground, where it sprang with a snap. She thrust the two weapons into my hands, distorted my face, and bade me intimidate the fog in the same way; and I repeated her cries, adding a few words of honest English for good measure. Then she re-entered her tent, rolled my jacket into a bundle, and summoned into it, one by one, all the offended spirits that had occasioned the untimely weather. Some were the

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house and little Knife-Blade, and with three of our best dogs, tried to follow up the spoor. But the dogs could not hold to it, and, after travelling several miles from hill-top to hill-top, we turned aside to stalk a herd of caribou. The men concealed themselves behind low mounds or in hastily dug pits, and the women, going to windward of the herd, sought to drive it into the ambush; but the animals stampeded past them and fled toward the coast. The disappointed hunters followed them, while Misty, The Listener's son, and myself returned to camp to see if Icehouse had cooked our supper, for we had eaten nothing for twelve hours. Icehouse, however, had been scraping caribou skins and had neglected to gather fuel. We started a fire for her with chips from a broken walking-stick, and descended into the valley below to gather an armful of dwarf willow. Suddenly Misty shouted, and, looking up, I saw the fantastic figure of my "mother" capering and gesticulating against the sky-line. "Bears, bears!" cried Misty, recognizing the signal and dashing up the hill. We burst into the camp, exclaiming together, "Where are they? Where are they?" and Icehouse, wildly waving her arms to the north, cried, "Over there, two of them in the valley yonder." I turned my binoculars on the place and examined it carefully. She was right; two white objects were moving slowly in the distance. They could not be

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solitary vigil, it certainly left no traces in her appearance or mode of greeting. Her people, unlike other Eskimo tribes, never voluntarily abandoned the aged and infirm to die of cold and starvation, but prolonged their closing years with loving care. Parents and children were united by tender bonds that neither time nor distance dissolved. I once witnessed the chance meeting of an old woman with her middle-aged son who had been living in a remote tribe for many years; the stalwart hunter knelt in the snow at her feet, and, as she raised her jacket, reverently touched with his lips the breast that had nourished him in childhood.

A little north of our camp, Bad Creek cut through an outcrop of dolomite, forming a narrow S-shaped cañon a quarter of a mile long and forty feet deep. The locality was very familiar to my companions. From a ledge just under the brow of the cliff we dropped our hooks into a deep pool, and in a few hours hauled out seven large trout. (Whether any trout remained in the pool all winter, or whether they ascended to a lake before the freeze-up, I do not know; above and below there was less than three feet of water in the stream, which would freeze to the bottom before Christmas.) A gravel beach at the outlet of the cañon contained numerous pebbles of iron pyrites, used by the natives for striking fire; and a neighbouring meadow was white with the seeds of the cotton-grass that supplied both tinder and wicks for the lamps. The

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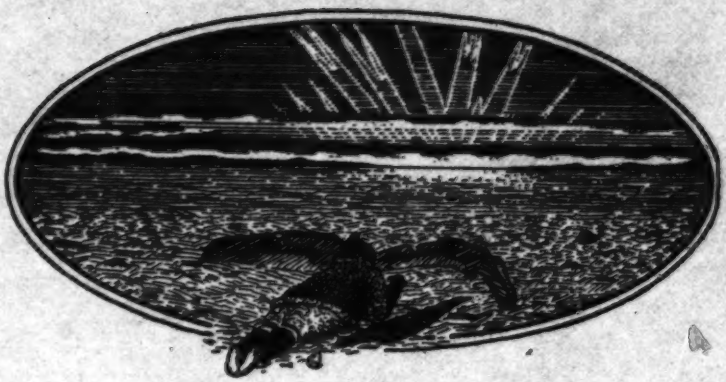

CHAPTER X

DARKENING DAYS

IKPUCK chose for our tent-site a level patch of ground beside a small lake that filled a dip in the rolling plain behind Dryad Harbour. Through a hole in the ice we drew our water, and for fuel we used the dwarf willow that grew abundantly all around, or burned the yellow fat of the polar bear in a naturally hollow stone. Low ridges blocked the view on all sides, shutting out even the sea four miles away; but the ridge to the north overlooked a long valley so rich in moss that we expected the migrating caribou to make it their highway. On the crest of this ridge, therefore, we built a low semi-circular wall of stones, chinked with snow, that would both conceal and shelter the watcher; and every morning, at dawn, some one visited the look-out post to search

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in the open water near shore. It was not difficult to 225
shoot them, but to bring them to land was an extremely hazardous enterprise, since a thin sheet of ice covered the water for a distance of a hundred yards out from the shore. Any dead seals that remained afloat, buoyed up by thick layers of blubber, drifted gently against its outer edge. Ikpuck crawled cautiously toward them, testing the ice in front of him with his hunting-knife; then, attaching a long line to a carcass, he retreated a few yards and dragged it out of the water. This was the most perilous task of all, and more than once the ice creaked ominously under the strain; but salt-water ice is less brittle than fresh-water, and he escaped with nothing worse than two badly frozen wrists. Out of six seals that floated he [372]
landed three, which provided enough blubber to last us a month, even if we kept the lamp burning five or six hours a day. He did not mention the freezing of his [752]
wrists, and we did not discover their condition until they turned completely black.

A lake near our camp yielded him other trophies. 226
True trout were lacking, but salmon-trout that had migrated up from the sea earlier in the summer now began to spawn along its margin. He could see the male fish, a brilliant red at this season, swimming around little piles of boulders where the inconspicuous females deposited their eggs. They fled when his chisel struck the ice above them, but the male, and even

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nourished Icehouse wriggled in her bag for several minutes before she tumbled, like an enormous chrysalis, head foremost onto the floor.

We occupied a real snow-hut at the Lake of Dancing, one that had been erected by our companions a week or more before. Here we dismantled our caches of dried meat and dried fish, and recovered my sled, the big spring tent, and all the other things we had deposited at this place in the early days of summer. Foxes, worming their way through sundry chinks and crevices in the stones, had destroyed all the sinew fishing-lines; fortunately we had plenty of cod-line that could take its place. More serious was the destruction of the white-bellied caribou hides from which Icehouse had intended to make some finely ornamented costumes for the winter dances; but I assuaged her grief by promising to purchase other hides for her when the tribes reassembled at the sealing-grounds. We sighted one of the marauding foxes near our camp, and lured it within range by squeaking like a young bird; but Ikpuck's bullet struck only the ground between its legs, and, though deluged with snow, it escaped without injury.

After fishing in various lakes for a few days with little success we overtook our companions at the source of a creek that flows into Dryad Harbour. They had abandoned all further hunting and fishing on the land under the pressure of colder weather and were return-

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ing to the coast, where they had stores of blubber to feed their lamps and give light and warmth to their houses. At this moment they were preparing their sleds for the journey, restoring the shoeing of frozen mud that had dropped off during the spring. They dug out the turf from a meadow with mattocks of curving antler, thawed and crushed it inside the houses to weed out the roots, kneaded it into "cricket-balls" with water, and plastered it along the bottoms of the upturned runners. There, while it was still soft, they moulded it into shape with their hands and scraped it smooth with long-handled knives. The mud froze to the hardness of stone, giving an admirable shoeing that would last throughout the winter; but its gritty surface required a thin coat of ice to make it frictionless against the snow, and the coat had to be renewed before each day's journey. When we were travelling down to the coast over the comparatively thin ice of a lake or river, my companions sometimes poured a few buckets of water over the surface and ran their sleds through the pool before it froze; but the usual, and, in the heart of winter, the invariable method, was to fill the mouth with water and squirt a stream over each runner, rubbing it down quickly with a mitten of polar-bear fur. The Eskimos preferred polar-bear fur because a special oil in its hair prevents the adhesion of water; for the same reason our zoologist-commander, always quick to recognize the value of Arctic

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857 end of each day's march insisted on performing all the duties that her mother would have undertaken in the [372] same circumstances. She gathered fuel for our campfire while Patsy and I put up the tent, and she superintended, as far as she knew how, the cooking of the [291] evening meal. Then she dried our marching boots [296] (for we changed to slippers each evening), and, before breakfast, patched any holes that the stones might have [224] cut in their soles the day before. She shot an eider [226] duck along the way with Patsy's rifle, and if we had needed fish would have contrived some means of catching them, where Patsy and I might have failed. Altogether, her education was remarkably adapted to the country in which she lived, even though the three R's were not included in the curriculum.

231 There now befell us an accident, of a kind that in an Arctic winter often leads to serious disaster, but in our circumstances caused only embarrassment. One of our two dogs, prowling with its pack beside a cliff, became wedged in a crevice, and in trying to extricate itself lacerated its foot on a sharp rock. I bandaged the wound with a strip of skin and lightened the animal's load, but it was so crippled that it could hardly keep pace with us. We could not abandon it, nor, if we remained with it, could we hope to reach our destination. To our great relief, however, we found two families of Eskimos camping at the mouth of a small creek, who promised to take charge